

**SUBJECT MATTER: Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget
Adjustments H.B. #5037 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET
FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING June 30,
2023**

**Independent Living Centers must have 1 million dollars increase to
Properly Fund CT's Five Independent Living Centers at \$1.75
Million**

My name is Sandra Roberts and I am testifying on behalf of the Centers for Independent Living. I have been involved with the Center for Disability Rights in West Haven, CT both as a staff person for 30 years and as a consumer.

The CORE funding has been eroding through the years and has not been enough to assist us in meeting the needs of consumers in our service area. In addition staff wages are not at a liveable level. This is very concerning. My current role is part-time information and referral advocate. We receive numerous phone calls for assistance with advocacy, peer counseling and independent living skills training. We do our best to meet the needs of consumers that are able to come by CDR especially if they have forms for benefits or housing applications. However when the need is more involved or they are unable to come in it becomes more difficult because we do not have the staff coverage to really go see our consumers in the field. The situation was exacerbated these past few years by COVID 19. We did the best we could with exceedingly difficult circumstances. We adapted with phone and video appointments. Using Cares Act Funds we matched consumers with technology like tablets so they could attend meetings with us or others. In addition it lessened their social isolation from family and friends. This was especially critical for our consumers who are vulnerable and have compromised immune systems.

Centers for Independent Living can actually save the state money as we assist in filling the gaps in services that other agencies cannot provide and sometimes we prevent people with disabilities from being placed in nursing homes which would have cost the state of Connecticut more money.

We really hope that you will consider increasing the CORE funding for Centers for Independent Living so we can start providing the level of services that we once provided. Our Center does our best to provide services to New Haven and Middlesex Counties and a few towns in Fairfield County.

We thank you for taking the time to hear our testimony and please consider increasing our CORE funding.

Sandra J. Roberts
44 Orange Street, Apt. 520
New Haven, CT 06510
e-mail: sandra_roberts14@aol.com